Senate Rules Committee to Hold Smithsonian Oversight Hearing

-Hearing scheduled for April 18 at 10 a.m.-

Washington, DC – U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Robert Bennett (R-Utah), Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Rules and Administration Committee, today announced plans to hold an oversight hearing on April 18, 2007, on the Smithsonian Institution.

Date:

Wednesday, April 18

Time:

10:00 a.m.

Location:

The Senate Rules and Administration Committee

Hearing Room

301 Russell Senate Office Building

"The Smithsonian is one of the premier institutions in the world. Our committee is committed to ensuring that its Administration maintains the public trust," Senator Feinstein said. "This hearing comes in the wake of reports by the Smithsonian's Inspector General which have raised questions about the Smithsonian's salary and spending practices."

"In recent years, the Smithsonian has opened several new museums, including the American Art Museum/Portrait Gallery, the American Indian Museum and the Udvar-Hazy Center and plans are now underway for its 19th museum—the National Museum of African American History and Culture. This is a great accomplishment," Senator Feinstein said. "But serious issues remain — including the deterioration of its physical plant and a huge backlog in maintenance and capital improvement requirements. It is imperative that we develop a better working partnership between the Smithsonian and Congress."

Senator Bennett said, "For more than 160 years the people of the United States, scholars and visitors from around the world have

benefited from the Smithsonian Institution. In addition to its vast collections of art, historic artifacts and specimens, the Smithsonian is one of the world's preeminent research institutions, contributing greatly to our understanding of science and the world around as.

"I recognize that many of the facilities administered by the Smithsonian bave become a part of our history themselves—come dating back more than 100 years. Bringing museum and research buildings up to current code standards is a serious matter that must be addressed in addition to its day-to-day activities. I look forward to working with Chairman Feinstein and the Smithsonian Institution's administration to ensure that federal funds are applied in the most cost-effective way possible." said Benneti.

Francinvited to textily include

- Smithsonian Secretary, Lawretter Smalls
- Chairman of the Regents' Executive Committee, Roger Sang and
 - Inspector General, A. Sprightly Ryan. .

The U.S. Senute Rules and Administration Committee has oversight responsibilities for the Smithsonian Institution. In addition to her position on this committee.

Senator Feinstein is chitaman of the Appropriations Subcommittee or the interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, which is responsible for Smithsonian public funding. Senator Bennett is a member of the same subcommittee.